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Potash & Perimutter Motors, Ltd.

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POTASH AND

PERLMUTTER MOTORS, LTD.

A. H. WOODS

CHANNING
POLLOCK
THEATRE
COLLECTION



HOWARD UNIVERSITY

"POTASH & PERIMUTTER MOTORS, LTD."

A Comedy in Three Acts

by

MONTAGUE GLASS and JULES ECKERT GOODMAN

Copyrighted 1920

by

Montague Glass & Jules Eckert Goodman.

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A C T I

SCENE:

Office and accessory salesroom of
Potash and Perlmutter Motors, Ltd.,
agent for the Schenkman Six.

When Curtain rises the stage is vacant
for an instant, but there is MARKS
PASINSKI giving directions to two work-
men. Almost at once there enters
MARKS, followed by the front end of an
automobile which is being pushed on by
the two workmen.

Marks

Here, look what you're doing. Now look, you got a mark there.
What do you think you're handling - ash-vans or something?

1st Man

Aw, that's nothing.

Marks

Nothing, he says. Two such scratches and right away you could
take a hundred dollars from the list price. Why don't you
carve your name on it and be done with it?

2nd Man

Don't get excited, Mr. Pasinski. A little scratch like that
only shows the quality of the paint.

Marks

Well, that's what we're afraid of. Here, don't push on the
mudguards. What do you want to do, bend 'em?

1st Man

Now, how's that for position?

2nd Man

Rotten! You only get a strong light on the radiator.

Marks

That's all right; a strong light on just a little bit of the
car makes all the rest look so much better.

(Blows on scratch and wipes it off with a silk
handkerchief)

There, that'll do. Where's the bosses?

1st Man

They've been out all morning giving a demonstration.

(Loud noise of engine exhaust)

I guess that's them now.

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(Abe and Mawruss heard outside)

Abe

Advice - that's all you're good for.

Mawruss

I ain't advising you, I'm telling you. The next time let ME drive.

Abe

You are a talker, not a driver.

Mawruss

I drive as good as you drive.

Abe

Don't I drive no better than that.

(THEY enter)

Mawruss

Let's the car slow up on every hill in Central Park.

Abe

Well, did I put the hills in Central Park?

Marks

Hello, Abe. Hello, Mawruss. Well boys, there she is - the Schenkmann Six.

Abe

Is this model the same as the Schenkmann Six what we're giving just now a demonstration to a customer?

Marks

Just the same. Ain't it a bird?

Mawruss

A bird? It's a reptile.

Abe

Say, Marky, what kind of a car are you wishing on us for our first automobile agency? Four times we give a demonstration with that car and this is the first time we didn't got to get towed home.

Marks

Maybe your demonstrator don't know how to run it.

Mawruss

What do you mean - our demonstrator? We had six demonstrators in one week. No self respecting demonstrator is going to demonstrate a sewing machine like that.

Marks

Say, I never said it was a '90 Simplex. You boys told me you was going to make a specialty to sell a nice family car for business men, not sports.

Abe

I know we did, but a business man wants to go once in a while anyhow TWENTY miles an hour, Markie.

Mawruss

And the way that car couldn't climb hills, Markie! You got to pull back into second to make it go over a manhole cover.

Marks

Now listen, boys. You've got the wrong idea about this car. As a car, y' understand, I admit it ain't a world-beater, but as a service station proposition it's a big money maker.

Abe

A service station proposition? Why what kind of crooks do you think we are anyway? Should we go to work and sell for two thousand dollars a car so as we could get the job of repairing it?

Mawruss

Don't you suppose we got some honor, some conscience?

Abe

And besides, what's to prevent our customers getting their cars repaired somewheres else?

Mawruss

I'm surprised to hear you speak this way, Markie.

Marks

Say, every car develops trouble sooner or later.

Abe

This car don't develop trouble. It's born in it.

Mawruss

On this last demonstration every minute I expected the customer to say he wanted a car not a carpet sweeper.

Abe

I was wishing that a mail wagon would hit us and take his mind off it.

Mawruss

And it ain't your fault that it didn't.

Abe

You don't say so! And since when was you such a careful

driver?

Mawruss

I anyhow only try to drive on one side of the road at a time, Abe.

Abe

All except when you come to a corner and then nobody could tell WHAT your plans are.

Mawruss

Is that so?

Abe

Traffic policemen has got throat trouble from calling you down. You try to be north, south, east and west bound traffic all at the same time. The way you drive, you would think you was being chased by a submarine.

Marks

Now boys, please! Tell me just what is the trouble with the car, Abe?

Mawruss

Ask him? He don't know enough about automobiles to be a taxi starter.

Abe

All right. You tell him.

Mawruss

What is there to tell? When it does run, it runs bad, and when it don't run, Henry Ford himself could speak to it and it wouldn't recognize him at all.

(Enter DAN DAVIS)

Here's Dan, our mechanic. Let him tell you what's the matter with it.

Abe

Dan, come here. Just tell Mr. Pasinski what's the matter with that Schenkmann Six out there.

Dan

Matter with it? That car's got nothing the matter with it.

Mawruss

Well, what HAS it got - a mean disposition?

Dan

It was running all right a few minutes ago.

Abe

It wasn't running all right for me. Maybe it doesn't like

me or something.

Dan

A twin six wouldn't like you if you run it with the emergency brake on.

Marks

What! You mean to say he was running it all the time with the emergency brake on?

Mawruss

HAST DU GEHÖRT? Runs the car with the emergency brake on and expects it to like him yet! Murderer!

Abe

Well, you was in the car with me, why didn't you REMIND me the emergency brake was on?

Mawruss

Remind you to breathe! Anyone who would run a car with the emergency brake on couldn't be trusted to run a wheelbarrow.

Dan

And another thing. The reason why you had to be towed in yesterday was because you tried to show a customer how many miles you got to a gallon, and after your gallon can was empty you never thought to connect up your gas line with the main tank.

Mawruss

That's how much he knows about an automobile. Button-hole maker!

Abe

And who are YOU? Mr. Rolls or Mr. Royce? I am three months in the automobile business and I should know how to connect up a gas line with the main tank.

Mawruss

Well, you should OUGHT to know. Am I in the business any longer than you are, and did I ever forget to connect up this here whatever it is?

Dan

But as a matter of fact, it was you driving yesterday, Mr. Perlmutter.

Abe

What! HE was driving with this here whose this disconnected. What do you mean by driving with that thing disconnected?

Mawruss

But, Abe, you said yourself-----

Abe

Never mind WHAT I said. Takes a customer for two thousand dollars and drives him with the whole thing disconnected.

Mawruss

That's Markie's fault. He told us that the car would run 18 miles to a gallon, and all I got from that gallon tank was 15 miles.

Abe

And do you think a gallon can would last forever even if it does hold two gallons?

Marks

But I warned you, boys. You shouldn't give no guarantee as to gas mileage.

Mawruss

We didn't furnish you with no gallon tank, so what did you want to put it on for?

Dan

They didn't put it on, I did it. But I didn't do it to demonstrate gas saving for the customers. I wanted to show Mr. Perlmutter that this car is no gas eater. If this concern expects to sell cars to business men they are not going to get away with an engine that only gives five miles to the gallon.

Abe

He's all right, Markie.

Dan

Sure I'm right, and with gas it 35 cents a gallon it's time somebody thought about running a motor with another fuel besides gas.

Marks

Well, what COULD you run it with - bromo seltzer? You could run it with gas or you couldn't run it at all.

Dan

Why couldn't you?

(Takes bottle from pocket)

Now here is a fuel that I've been working on for some time and---

Mawruss

Put that MACHSHOVOS away.

Dan

There are millions of dollars in that bottle, Mr. Perlmutter.

Mawruss

For the Standard Oil company, not us.

Dan

But, Mr. Perlmutter----

Mawruss

Now listen, Dan. I ain't going to talk to you about that again. If some people wants to fool away their time with perpetual motions, that's their business. If there is concerns which would invest money in turning zinc into gold, they've got my permission. But me and my partner could find hundreds of ways to get stung without backing inventions.

Abe

There are plenty of ways for a business man to lose money nowadays, and if we go broke, we go broke legitimate.

Mawruss

And furthermore, Dan, gasoline may be out of date, but it's good enough for those chauffeurs out there, and if you ain't watching they'll get away with a couple of hundred gallons on you.

Dan

Just the same some day you'll regret----

Abe

It's a whole lot better to regret before than afterwards.
(Exit Dan)

Marks

That's a fine crank, that feller. Just to boost his own crazy invention he don't care how many sales he ruins on you.

Abe

He means well, even if he don't understand business.

Mawruss

He's been with us ever since we started and he ain't had even a Sunday off. He's a hard worker.

(Enter LEON and MRS. SAMMET)

Abe

And besides, he's right about the car. It uses more gas than a dry cleaner-----

Mawruss

Abe-----! Hello, Leon! How do you do, Mrs. Sammet.

Leon

Good morning, Mawruss.

Mrs. Sammet

Good morning, Mr. Perlmutter.

Abe

Well, well, if it ain't Leon Sammet and Mrs. Sammet! Nu, Leon, what is the good word?

Mawruss

You know Mr. Pasinski. Mr. Pasinski is now the general sales manager for the Schenkmann Six.

Marks

How do you do, how do you do, Mr. Sammet! Well, boys, I must be going over to the office and I would be back later.

Abe

All right, Markie. Much obliged for calling.

Marks

Don't mention it. Let me know if you make any more sales.

Mawruss

Thank you, Markie, thank you.

Marks

And don't forget what I told you about the small tank. If you don't use it you can get 25 miles to the gallon.

Abe

At least.

(Exit Marks Pasinski)

Leon

Well, Abe, how does it feel to be selling automobiles instead of garments?

Abe

There ain't no difference. If you've got a good line you can always get the orders.

Mawruss

Why you've no idea how many cars we've sold already, Leon. Mozart Rabiner has bought one; Margolius brothers has bought one; Fishbein & Blintz has got one apiece; in fact we are selling cars to all our old competitors.

Abe

We are getting even now.

Mawruss

Abe -- open the car door for Mrs. Sammet.

Mrs. Sammet

Thank you.

Abe

Don't be afraid to step right in and sit down. You couldn't hurt that upholstery. Ain't it comfortable? Reminds you of an ambulance, what?

Mrs. Sammet

An ambulance?

Mawruss

Abe, what are you---! Keep still, can't you?

Abe

Never mind, the way roads is so rotten nowadays it don't do no harm that a car could be used for an ambulance - in particular people which drives their own cars.

Mawruss

Abe--!

Abe

I am only saying that God forbid something happens you on the road, Mrs. Sammet. It's better to be prepared, ain't it?

Mawruss

My partner is always joking. Get out! Excuse me, what was you saying, Mrs. Sammet?

Mrs. Sammet

It's perfectly safe for Mr. Sammet to drive, isn't it?

Abe

That's one thing about this car, Mrs. Sammet. Leon could drive it fine. It's fool proof.

Mawruss

Abe---! He means it's perfectly safe for anybody to drive.

Leon

Mrs. Sammet is always nervous about these things. I've been driving cars for years and I can handle any car trouble that comes my way.

Abe

Then this is the car you ought to have.

Leon

All I want to see is the engine.

Mawruss

Why certainly, Leon. Abe, lift the hood on that side. I'll lift it on this.

(Both start to lift hood together and Abe's hand gets jammed.)

Abe

Look out! What are you doing!

Mawruss

Look out yourself. You are always getting hurt.

Mrs. Sammet

Is it serious?

Mawruss

It's nothing. Some people oughtn't to monkey with a safety pin except under ether. Now Leon, there is our power plant. Ain't it beautiful?

Leon

I can tell better after you start it.

Mawruss

It's no trick to start it. Abe, start the car.

(Abe puts his foot on the self-starter. The starting worker operates, but the engine doesn't start)

It's a little cold yet.

(Abe works starter again. No result)

You've got to humor 'em a little. In especially a new car, which it is sometimes a little stiff, and--- Chommer, why don't you turn the switch on?

Leon

I thought you said the car was fool proof.

Mawruss

It's proof against ordinary fools, but against a --- excuse me -- a damn fool like Abe Potash, nothing is proof.

(The car starts quietly. Suddenly it begins to pop)

Give it gas, give it gas.

Abe

I did give it gas. What am I, a dentist?

Leon

Never mind starting it again. You can demonstrate how she runs when she gets on the road. Now about the carbureter----

Mawruss

The carbureter is A number one, Leon.

Leon

Yes, but what type is it?

Abe

Say, what's the difference WHAT type it is? A carbureter is a carbureter. Would you believe me, Leon, I've been in this business now three months and I've seen hundreds of carbureters, and I give you my word I couldn't tell one carbureter from another.

Mawruss

Abe, will you please be quiet! You don't know the first thing about carbureters.

Abe

And I don't want to know, either. The less you know about carbureters the better. A carbureter is like a rattlesnake, Leon. If you don't interfere with the carbureter, the carbureter won't interfere with you.

Leon

But how do you adjust it?

Abe

What do you want to adjust it for?

Mawruss

Does he have to tell YOU what he wants to adjust it for? Keep your mouth shut, will you?

Abe

That's all right. I've got three months' experience now with cars and my advice to you is, that if you don't monkey with the carbureter until you HAVE to, you will never HAVE to.

Mrs. Sammet

What's that round thing there?

Mawruss

That's the distributor.

Abe

So HE says.

Mawruss

Well, if it ain't, what IS it?

Abe

The name I couldn't tell you, but there is something in there which goes round and round and if you monkey with it while the engine is running you could injure yourself for life.

Mrs. Sammet

And you want my husband to buy a car like that?

Mawruss

Abe! Are you crazy or something?

Leon

Nobody would be foolish enough to monkey with it while the engine is running.

Mawruss

And besides, you would NEVER HAVE to monkey with it, Leon. When we sell you a car, Leon, we don't let it get out of our place until it runs like a watch.

Abe

Ask anybody what has bought one, Leon. They would tell you. Mozart Rabiner, Margolius brothers, - anybody.

Mawruss

Why, Leon, we ain't trying to sell you only a 1920 Schenkman. We are trying to well you a 1921 Schenkman - a 1923 Schenkman.

Abe

And if they last that long a 1924 Schenkman.

Mawruss

We are out to make new customers and keep them. We want people who buy cars to be satisfied with them. This is a pleasure car and we want our customers to take pleasure IN it. A customer, Leon, should be a friend and---
(MOZART RABINER has entered during foregoing speech)

Abe

Mawruss, look who's here.

Mawruss

Why if it ain't Mozart Rabiner! Well, well, Mo, how is the car running?

Mozart

Don't you speak to me, you murderer you!

Mawruss

'Ssh! Mo, if you please, ladies is here. Mozart, you know Mrs. Sammet.

Mozart

Excuse me, Mrs. Sammet, but I ain't here on no social call. I am here on business. These men know in their hearts what I am here for.

Abe

Sure, sure, and we are glad you are so satisfied with the car, Rabiner.

Mozart

Satisfied with it! Who said I was satisfied with it?

Mawruss

Mozart, please, not in front of Mrs. Sammet.

Mozart

Why not? Because you are trying to stick them with this car, too?

Leon

Why, what's the matter with your car?

Mozart

Do you want me to tell you all that right here and now? Come down to Far Rockaway and spend a couple of weeks with me, Leon, and I'll tell you about half of it.

Mawruss

Now, please, Rabiner, you can tell us in private what you've got to say about this car.

Mozart

Car? What car? The Schenkmann Six? That ain't a car, it's a reaper and binder. Everything makes a noise in it except the horn.

Leon

How long have you had it?

Mozart

Two weeks, and whenever I drive it around the block I feel like a trap drummer in a jazz orchestra.

Abe

What is two weeks to judge a car by?

Mozart

Say, I judged it in one. I've run it seven hundred miles, had three blow-outs, a broken front spring, the battery has gone dead on me and I've bought 200 gallons of gasoline.

Mawruss

Well, could we help it if you have hard luck with the car?

Mozart

What do you mean -- could you help it? Didn't you tell me the car made 15 miles to the gallon?

Mawruss

The gasoline we admit, but even a Pierce-Arrow could run over a beer bottle, Rabiner.

Abe

Blames US for his hard luck. I suppose, Rabiner, if you picked up three nines in the widder you would lay it to the National Playing card company.

Leon

But how about the front spring and the battery?

Mozart

The front spring broke because the weight ain't distributed right, and as for the battery, any car that's wired like this car is bound to go dead.

Mawruss

And since when was you such an automobile expert, Rabiner?

Mozart

I've been down to see Henry D. Feldman about this car and he recommended me to one of the biggest experts in the country. He's an engineer that has testified in all the big automobile cases, and while this won't be a big one, it'll be a quick one, because when the jury hears what he has to say about the Schenkmann Six, they won't be out two minutes.

Mawruss

Say, say, Rabiner, don't throw us no bluffs. If you want to sue, SUE.

Mozart

I will sue. Anyone that would stick an old friend with a car like that ought to be sued. I won't wait a day, Perlmutter. I will go right straight down from here to

Feldman's office and--

(During the above speech PASINSKI has returned and he interrupts)

Marks

Hello, Mozart! Hello, Abe! Well, I got back again and I knew Mozart's car as soon as I laid eyes on it. It looks fine, Mozart. You've had it two weeks now, ain't it?

Mozart

I have.

Marks

Well, what is the verdict, Mozart?

Mawruss

Ask us, not him. We are the jury in this case, Pasinski, and we have considered all the evidence. And the verdict is that me and my partner has decided to give up the agency for the Schenkmann Six.

Marks

But what am I going to tell the Schenkmann company?

Abe

When Mrs. Sammet goes we will tell you what you can tell them.

Mawruss

And you can also tell them that they will have to make good for every car we have sold our old friends, and as for you, Mr. Sammet, I can only say I am sorry we took up you and your wife's time. We are only in this business three months and we've got a whole lot to learn about it.

Leon

I understand, Mawruss, and when you and Abe get hold of a good car let me know. Come, Sadie.

Mrs. Sammet

Isn't it a shame! And it was such a pretty color, too. Just matched my blue evening coat.

(Exit Mr. and Mrs. Sammet)

Marks

Well, Rabiner, this is a nice thing you are doing for your old friends.

Mawruss

Speak for yourself, Markie, not us. If the Schenkmann Six is no good we want to know about it, and we are much obliged to Rabiner for telling us.

Mozart

Maybe I could have been a bit more considerate of you boys.

Mawruss

That's all right. Whatever you have lost, Mozart, we will see it is made good. We are not out to make a living by sticking anybody. We have never been ashamed of the goods we sold, Mozart, and we ain't going to begin now.

Abe

And besides, if a customer returns one garment on you what IS it, but if he returns one automobile on you, that's his whole season's business. Come, Markie, don't looks so RACHMONOS. You could easy find somebody else to take the agency of the Schenkmann Six.

Marks

But I don't want to find anybody else. I want to get from under myself, and I would do it, too, if you boys would only keep the agency for another month.

Mawruss

We wouldn't keep it for another hour. Every minute, every second, something is happening to them Schenkmann Sixes we already sold.

Abe

And he expects that we would sit here for another month while all over New York springs is breaking and tires is blowing out at our expense. Batteries are dying and we've got to pay funeral expenses.

Mozart

Why don't you get them the agency for a decent car.

Marks

That's what I want to do. In a month at the latest there is going to be a car marketed which will revolutionize the automobile business. It is something absolutely new.

Mozart

Who's the manufacturer?

Marks

I am.

Mawruss

You are? But I thought you----I didn't know you----I thought you had to be well fixed to manufacture cars.

Marks

Every penny I've got in the world, everything I could raise at banks, among friends, I've got in that car. I haven't had a whole night's rest in 18 months. My wife is worried sick. Her relations are in too. But I'm going to put it over -- I've got to put it over.

Abe

But suppose you don't put it over?

Marks

It can't fail, it's so simple. A child could see that motor and understand it. I've gone over it again and again with the inventor.

Abe

Oh, it's got an inventor in it, has it?

Mawruss

Well, ain't every invention got to have an inventor?

Abe

I know, but when you begin with inventors, Markie, where are you going to end?

Marks

Every invention's got to have a beginning. Why, Abe, 'way back in 1907, if you had taken a 100,000 dollars and invested it in Henry Ford's invention, where would you be today?

Abe

In Sing Sing, and I'd be there yet, because even in 1907, if anyone took a hundred thousand dollars, they got at least 20 years.

Marks

Well, it's all honest money I've got invested and it is invested in an honest proposition. I've had big experts go into it and I'm satisfied that if you boys take the New York agency for it, you will make a whole lot of money.

Mozart

And as manufacturer, I suppose you'll make a whole lot more.

Marks

I would make it if I could go into it on a big scale, but at first I expect to market the car only in New York, and naturally you boys will get the benefit of that feature of it.

Mozart

But why CAN'T you go into it on a big scale?

Abe

Excuse me, but there are at least ten reasons why somebody couldn't go into anything on a big scale, and nobody stays to listen to the other nine.

Mawruss

Well, he didn't ask you for any money, did he?

Abe

A gambler like you don't HAVE to be asked. You are always going into propositions like that.

Mawruss

Propositions like what? Did I say I was going into it?

Abe

You don't have to say it, I could tell from your face what you are thinking.

Mawruss

Suppose I DO think. Somebody has got to think around here, Abe, and if you are content to sit back and see an opportunity like this slip away from you, I ain't.

Marks

But, Mawruss, I didn't ask you to go into this.

Mawruss

It's all right, Markie, I know the way you feel about it.

Marks

But I don't feel that way about it.

Mawruss

Say FEEL, NOT feel. When a man is in your position he shouldn't consider the opinion of an old fossil like Abe Potash.

Abe

Me an old fossil?

Mawruss

Certainly you are. You don't want to get ahead yourself and you don't want nobody else to get ahead neither.

Abe

Did I SAY I didn't want to get ahead?

Mawruss

It ain't what you say, it's how you act, and in this case I mean to act and act quick, so I am asking you, Markie, how much money do you want us to put into this thing?

Marks

I don't want you to put nothing into it. If I want more capital I am quite able to raise it myself, especially as Abe feels the way he does.

Mawruss

Then leave Abe out of it. I will go into this without him.

Abe

Is that so? Ain't there such a thing as a partnership agreement between us?

Mawruss

There IS, but it can be broken.

Abe

But, Mawruss, listen to me.

Mawruss

I've listened to you long enough. If you don't want to go ahead with me, stay behind. Go back into the garment business or an old man's home.

Mozart

Now, boys, boys, be reasonable. Of course it's none of my business, but if Pasinski has a good proposition, and it sounds like a good one, this is not the way for anybody to go into it.

Abe

But he don't want us to go into it.

Mozart

I didn't say he did, but if he did, it sounds so good, that -- that I might even go into it myself.

Abe

YOU would!

Mozart

Under certain conditions. Now, if I were going into this thing -- and I MIGHT -- I would get Pasinski to bring the inventor here with his plans and specifications, and I would have an expert go over them right in this very office.

Abe

But where would we get such an expert?

Mozart

Why you can get the engineer that Feldman recommended to me. In fact, I can bring him here myself - this morning. And if he says it's all right -- well, then we can ALL go into it.

Marks

But I don't want anyone to go into it unless they can go in big.

Mozart

Don't worry, if I go into it it'll HAVE to be big. Now then, are you willing to meet here with the inventor and the expert?

Marks

It can't do any harm.

Mozart

And how about you, Abe?
(Abe hesitates)

Mawruss

Well, speak up, can't you?

Abe

(Shrugging his shoulders)
So mechullah, so mechullah, I'm agreeable.
(Enter OFFICER MILLER)

Miller

Excuse me, gentlemen, for butting in here, but I ain't going to talk to nobody about it again. I'm sick and tired of being a good feller. Anybody else but me would hand the parties a summons and let 'em tell it to the judge.

Abe

What's the matter? Did we sell him a Schenkman Six too?

Miller

That's all right, kid all you want to, but suppose the sergeant comes along and sees them two cars up against the fire hydrant? Who gets sent down to headquarters, me or you?

Mawruss

Here, officer, have a cigar, and I'll charge that to you, Markie. You're always leaving your car there.

Marks

I'll take it right away. Are you coming, Rabiner?

Mozart

Right away, Markie. Shall we say here at one o'clock?

Mawruss

Any time suits me.

Marks

And we'll have the inventor and expert with us.
(They both go out)

Abe

Inventor! Expert! Ai, tzuris!
(Sees Miller)

Well, is there anything else you want from me?

Miller

Why - er - the fact is, a policeman has got to do a whole lot of unpleasant things once in a while, and I hope what I'm going to tell you gentlemen, you won't hold against me.

Mawruss

NOW what have we done?

Miller

You've got a man working for you called Dan - Dan Davis?

Mawruss

We have.

Abe

And he's a very good worker, too.

Miller

He was in the old days -- a good worker and a rapid worker. Ten years ago he could pinch your watch and chain like that.

Mawruss

You mean to say he's a pickpocket?

Miller

He was a pickpocket, but for all I know he may be a yegg by now. He was in Elmira Reformatory for three years.

Abe

I think you must be mistaken. The boy looks like such a good boy.

Miller

You can't tell nothing by looks. A bad egg looks just like a good egg. A hardboiled egg looks like a soft boiled egg. And believe me, a graduate of Elmira is hardboiled and bad, no matter HOW he looks.
(Exit Miller)

Mawruss

Well, Abe, when we pick 'em, we certainly pick 'em bad. For a car we pick a lemon and for a foreman we pick a pickpocket.

Abe

But how could WE tell that that poor feller NEBICH used to be a pickpocket?

Mawruss

We could have looked him up, couldn't we?

Abe

Suppose we had looked him up, do you think he would have given us ten years references as a first class A number one pickpocket?

Mawruss

But the feller told us he learned his trade in Elmira. That ought to have made us suspect him.

Abe

Louis Marshall and John B. Stanchfield also learned their trade in Elmira - and does anybody suspect them?

Mawruss

Well anyhow, sitting here talking about it wouldn't be any use.

(He rises)

Abe

Here, where are you going?

Mawruss

I'm going to call that young feller in here and fire him on the spot.

Abe

You wouldn't positively do nothing of the kind.

Mawruss

Why not? You heard what the policeman said, didn't you?

Abe

Sure I heard. He said the young feller was a pickpocket ten years ago. And you was a garment operator 20 years ago and you got over it, didn't you?

Mawruss

A garment operator ain't a pickpocket.

Abe

Sure, I know, but if a garment operator could improve himself why couldn't a pickpocket?

Mawruss

Well, for one thing, an ex-garment operator you could trust with the keys to the safe. Furthermore, I wouldn't have no ex-pickpockets working around here.

Abe

Say, who are you, the Supreme Court or something? The law says a pickpocket should go to prison for three years, and you say he should be out of work for life?

Mawruss

Let the feller work for some other concern.

Abe

And when some other concern finds it out, they'll say let him work for some OTHER concern, and when THAT concern finds it out he's got to go to still another concern, until at last if the feller wants a steady job he's simply got to be a pickpocket.

Mawruss

Say, what are we running here, anyway? A prison reform association?

Abe

We are running a business to make a living -- for us and for the people we've got working for us - and so long as they do right by us we should worry what they did to somebody else ten years ago.

Mawruss

All right, Abe, keep the young feller if you want to, but remember that----here, what are you doing to the safe there!

Abe

I am locking the middle compartment where the stamps are. I got a heart and a conscience, Mawruss, but I ain't exactly a damn fool.

(Enter ROSIE)

Mawruss

Hello, Rosie!

Rosie

Good morning, Mawruss.

Abe

Hello, Mommer, what are you doing in this part of town?

Rosie

Oh, I had a little shopping to do, and----

Mawruss

Abe, unlock the safe again. They are beginning to mark down dresses on the Avenue.

Abe

Well, Mommer, what's new at home?

Rosie

Cousin Tillie was around this morning.

Abe

Yes? I hope she was well. That woman ain't been sick at her own expense for years already.

Rosie

Ain't you ashamed to talk that way about poor cousin Tillie?

Abe

Say, when a woman goes to work and has operation after operation, how SHOULD I talk?

Rosie

What do you mean, operation after operation? One operation for appendicitus she had.

Abe

How many operations do you WANT her to have at five hundred dollars apiece?

Mawruss

Excuse me, I've got family affairs of my own.

Rosie

Wait, Mawruss, don't go. This concerns you too.

Mawruss

Me too? Say, Abe and me are partners, but I never agreed to go fifty-fifty on family diseases, Rosie.

Rosie

This is business, Mawruss. Abe tells me you are looking for a stenographer.

Abe

We are looking for a stenographer, but if cousin Tilly wants to work out her operation at twenty dollars a week as a stenographer here, I'll schenck it to her.

Rosie

Cousin Tilly don't know anything about stenography. It's Hattie.

Mawruss

Oh, it's Hattie, is it? Well, I thought that Abe had cuased out every last member of your family, Rosie, but I can remember Hattie.

Abe

Say, you've got nothing on me. She is all the time springing new names on me.

Rosie

Why you remember Hattie. She's Tillie's daughter.

Abe

You mean the little girl that had to have her teeth straightened for three hundred and twenty-five dollars?

Rosie

Ach, that was 12 years ago.

Abe

When I think of that bill it seems like yesterday.

Rosie

She's been working now for three years as stenographer for a referee in bankruptcy and he's given her a wonderful recommendation.

Mawruss

Well then, why didn't she stay there?

Rosie

Cousin Tillie don't want her to stay there. It's time now the girl should get married and in the office of a referee in bankruptcy the best she could expect to get acquainted with was bankrupts.

Abe

Well, the best she could expect to get acquainted with here is car owners.

Mawruss

And from what it costs to run cars nowadays all she has to do is to stay in the bankrupt office and sooner or later the car owners would show up there.

Rosie

I ain't joking, Mawruss.

Mawruss

Neither are we. If a stenographer wants to get engaged to be married out of office hours that's her business, but inside of office hours she's got to have her mind on her work.

Rosie

But she HAS got her mind on her work. Why, if she thought that me and Tillie had any such scheme as this she would never speak to us again.

Abe

Well, she won't hear a word about it from us.

Rosie

She'd feel terribly embarrassed if she thought she was working here under those conditions.

Abe

And we would feel terribly embarrassing if she worked here under ANY conditions.

Rosie

But, Abe, listen-----!

Abe

S'nough, Rosie! Once and for all, you've got to understand that business is business, and in business you could only deal with business troubles, not family troubles. Furthermore, if we would hire a stenographer we want a business woman, someone who is strictly business and---

(Enter COUSIN TILLIE)

Tillie

If you don't mind, Rosie, I would sit down for a while. Since I've had them spells with my back I get awful dizzy from standing.

Rosie

Sure, sure, sit down, Tillie. Tillie, this is Mr. Perlmutter. Mrs. Friedman, Mawruss.

Mawruss

How are you, Mrs. Friedman.

Tillie

I don't know. The last few days every step I take it seems to me like I was going to drop. Well, Abe, you look fine umberufen.

Abe

I've got to look fine. If I ain't healthy it's on me. Nobody schenks me to no sicknesses.

Rosie

Abe---! Why where has Hattie gone?

Tillie

She's outside talking to the foreman.

Abe

She begins already.

Tillie

He was showing her how he makes records of the sale of gasoline.

Rosie

You see, right away she takes an interest.

Abe

That's very kind of her, but as I was telling you just now, Rosie, when we want someone to take an interest here we would advertise in the newspapers or apply to a stenographer's agency, because---

(Enter HATTIE FRIEDMAN.. She is extremely good looking)

Mawruss

Abe--!

Abe

Because as I was saying, Rosie, me and Mawruss would----

Mawruss

Abe, would you please introduce me to this young lady?

Rosie

Excuse me, Mawruss. Hattie, this is Mr. Perlmutter.

Hattie

How do you do, Mr. Perlmutter. I hope you won't mind my having looked around outside.

Mawruss

Say, why should we mind? Abe, will you please stop walking up and down? You drive me crazy.

Abe

But, Mawruss, I want to tell you that I-----

Mawruss

Abe, one moment, please. And how do you like our place, Miss Friedman?

Hattie

It looks all right, but if you don't mind my saying so, I think your way of keeping a record of gasoline sales is all wrong.

Abe

Is THAT so! And how do YOU know that, I'd like to know?

Hattie

Well, I've just finished taking the testimony in the bankruptcy of a large garage company and that was the way they kept THEIR records.

Tillie

Ain't it terrible that a young girl should be mixed up in such things? Why, when I was her age I was already married.

Abe

Rosie, take her outside, will you please? Now, Miss Friedman, tell us about this. You mean to say they went broke thru keeping such records?

Hattie

It was one of the reasons.

Tillie

Little did I ever think that a daughter of mine should have to work for a living. If her poor father had only lived things would have been different, believe me.

Abe

Mrs. Friedman, for heaven's sake keep quiet and give your daughter a chance, will you? Now, Miss Friedman, just show Mr. Perlmutter and me where we could keep them records differently.

Tillie

If she would only get married once.

Hattie

Mother, please!

Rosie

Perhaps Tillie and me would better be going.

Mawruss

She ain't helping her daughter none by staying here.

Tillie

If I would only live to see the day that my daughter would have a home of her own.

Abe

One thing at a time. Just now you want her to have a job of her own, ain't it?

Tillie

I don't want to stand in her light.

Abe

Then go and attend to the home she has already got.

Rosie

And you are going to give Hattie a job?

Abe

What do you say, Mawruss?

Tillie

For my sake, Mr. Perlmutter.

Hattie

But mother, I don't want to come to work here for anybody's sake. If I'm not up to the job, they don't want me.

Mawruss

Who said we didn't want you? Now about those gasoline sales, Miss Friedman--

(They go upstage talking)

Rosie

Abe, you will remember what I told you, won't you?
(She goes out)

Tillie

I ain't got long to live, Abe. Right this minute I've got a pain running thru my heart like a knife yet. It takes me all of a sudden and----

Abe

Say, what are you trying to do, talk yourself into another operation? Get out of here before I ring for an ambulance.
(Exit Tillie)

Mawruss

And you think that we should record each sale separately?

Hattie

I'm sure we should, because here you have the cash price and the credit price all lumped together so that you don't know how to figure your overhead.

Mawruss

Well then, Miss Friedman, as I understand it you reckon for evaporation that-----

Abe

Say, let me in on this too, Mawruss. In a partnership, gasoline evaporates on one partner just as much as on the other.
(Enter DAN)

Dan

Mr. Perlmutter, the agent for the building is outside. He says he doesn't see any need of doing that plumbing job in the service department.

Abe

Say, the only time an agent for a building does see any need of repairs is two minutes after the building falls down. Wait, I'll talk to that feller.

Mawruss

YOU'LL talk to him! I'll talk to him. When you get mad at somebody it ain't a call-down, it's an entertainment.
(They go out quarreling)

Dan

A couple of boobs. Good-hearted boob, likeable boobs -- but boobs.

Hattie

They weren't boobs when it came to keeping tabs on gas sales.

Dan

You can be tight without being bright, if you get me.

Hattie

Anyone who wants to cut down expenses in business today has got to be bright.

Dan

I know it, but if they were a bit brighter they wouldn't waste their time saving gasoline. They would get wise to this.

(He shows bottle)

Hattie

What's that, cough mixture?

Dan

White pine and balsam, guaranteed to give any automobile its second wind so that it will climb Pike's Peak on high. It can be made to sell at ten cents a gallon. It's what John D. Rockefeller has been dreaming about for years.

Hattie

But John D. Rockefeller can afford to dream. He hasn't got a job to keep as a garage foreman.

Dan

I don't want a job--I want a chance.

Hattie

You have a chance here. I don't know much about Mr. Perlmutter, but Mr. Potash is a sort of relation of my mother. He has been as generous as if he were her brother. Believe me, if you expect to find someone better to work for you'll have to spend a fortune for advertising.

Dan

Don't you suppose I know that?

Hattie

Then why don't you stick to a good job when you have one?

Dan

I'd like to, but it's like this. I've had lots of good steady jobs for a good steady man, and just when I thought I was getting good and steady some well-meaning friend from the past told my bosses something for their own good.

Hattie

Some friend from the past?

Dan

Yes. You see, it's like this: Some families send their sons to Yale and some send them to Princeton, but my family sent me to Elmira.

Hattie

Elmira?

Dan

Don't get up, it isn't catching. You have to have a family like mine to be like me. My father never seems to pick them right at the race track. Heaven knows he ought to have. He spent all his time there. My mother hadn't the proper training to be his wife. She was the only daughter of some good folks who spoiled her for my father by being too fond of her. He didn't have the time to keep it up. It kept him away from the track, so, one year after I was born she died. Father brought me up. My preparatory School was Chatham Square, and I earned my own tuition the way they earn it in Chatham Square. After that I entered Elmira and graduated eight years later.

Hattie

But why don't you tell Potash and Perlmutter? Tell them before somebody else tells them. I know they won't have the heart to send you away.

Dan

I made exactly that same mistake in my last place and in two other places. And besides, what's the hurry? Somebody's bound to tell them soon, and then----

Hattie

But you have been perfectly honest ever since. I know you have.

Dan

HOW do you know I have?

Hattie

Because -- because -- well, you HAVE been honest, haven't you?

Dan

I refuse to answer upon the ground that it would tend to incriminate and degrade me and you wouldn't believe me anyhow.

(Enter POTASH and PERLMUTTER)

Abe

What do you want a wash bowl put in there for? Let them wash themselves in their own time, not ours.

Mawruss

Well, they get dirty in OUR time.

Abe

WE PAY them to get dirty, don't we? Dan, what are you doing here?

Dan

Why, I've just been talking to Miss Friedman.

Abe

So soon?

Dan

And she has something important to tell you.

Mawruss

Well, what is it?

Hattie

Dan says -- and I think you ought to know -- that--er-----

Abe

Well, go on.

Hattie

Dan said that your record of tire sales are just as incomplete as your gas sales.

Mawruss

We'll go into that with you afterward, Miss Friedman.

Abe

And in future, Dan, if you have something to say like you said just now to Miss Friedman, tell us and not her.

Dan

I would have told you, but I was afraid you wouldn't take it the way she did.

(Exit Dan)

Mawruss

Miss Friedman, we are expecting some people here, so you would better go out to lunch because we wouldn't need you for a half hour or so.

Abe

Wait, Mawruss, let her stay.

Mawruss

But for what we have to do in the next half hour we don't need a stenographer.

Abe

No, but we need a witness. And with an expert and an inventor trying to pin us down it wouldn't do no harm to have a stenographer neither.

Mawruss

But people ain't going to speak their mind if they know that someone is taking down everything they say.

Abe

Then let them not say everything they say. If you thought everything you said was being taken down you needn't say what you do say.

Mawruss

Why, what do I say what I shouldn't say?

Abe

Never mind what you say. Only last Tuesday you said to me an insult which I don't remember now what it was, but I've got a memorandum of it at home in my other suit, and it pretty near burns a hole in the pocket.

Mawruss

Say, say, what I say to you sounds like a compliments compared to what you say to me.

Hattie

Well, perhaps I'd better just jot down what I think is important.

Abe

That's right. Don't pay no attention to what HE says. Go below the books there. You have been a stenographer in a bankruptcy office. Just put down what you think would sound favorable to us if it ever comes to a showdown in a bankruptcy office.

(Enter MARKS PASINSKI, GEORGE BATES, MOZART RABINER and WALTER F. GIBBS)

Gibbs

With the weight distributed in that manner you are not nearly so liable to skid. The best practise in such matters is to distribute it as I have indicated.

Bates

I follow the practise of all the big manufacturers.

Gibbs

And quite right, too, but of course even the biggest manufacturers are not always free from error in such matters. Now for instance, take your drawings here.

(He spreads drawing on table)

Now here is the center and---

Abe

Excuse me, but just so as nobody is going to feel insulted by being called an inventor when he is an expert, y'understand, introduce us, Markie.

Marks

Oh, excuse ME, Abe. This is Mr. Bates, the inventor of the Climax Four. These gentlemen are Mr. Potash -- and Mr. Perlmutter.

Mawruss

Glad to meet you, Mr. Bates.

Abe

How do you do, Mr. Bates. I often heard from inventors, but this is the first time I ever seen one. Tell me, how is it now with inventors? Are they busy?

Mawruss

What do you mean, are they busy? Do you suppose inventors sends out men on the road with a line of inventions?

Abe

Say, for all I know about inventors they might do a MAIL order business in inventions. And this gentleman here is the expert, I suppose?

Mozart

Excuse me - this is Mr. Gibbs.

Mawruss

How do you do, Mr. Gibbs.

Abe

I suppose, Mr. Gibbs, you was ALSO an inventor before you worked your way up?

Gibbs

No doubt you've heard of the Gibbs Air Cooled Motor?

Abe

I should ought to have heard of it, but probably on the day they printed it in the paper somebody got murdered or

something. Now tell me, Mr. Gibbs, is there anything in this invention or is it just an invention?

Mawruss

Abe, for heaven's sake keep your mouth shut, will you? He means, Mr. Gibbs, what is your opinion as an expert about Mr. Bates's motor?

Gibbs

As far as I've gone, Mr. Perlmutter, I should say that Mr. Bates has a motor car which seems to present many excellent features. I am just a little dubious about the distribution of the weight over the chassis.

Abe

Say, as far as that goes, everybody could decide for himself. In a five passenger car I always stick the fattest on the front seat, because if three people wants to ride comfortably in the back seat one of them has got to be practically a living skeleton.

Mawruss

Listen, Abe, nobody asks you to make speeches here.

Marks

After these gentlemen get thru, Abe, then we will all say what we have to say.

Mozart

You were discussing the distribution of the weight, Mr. Gibbs.

Bates

As a matter of fact I don't carry much weight in front.

Abe

Well, please God, if things break right for you, you could eat in decent restaurants and carry MORE weight in front.

Mawruss

Listen, are you going to keep still and give these gentlemen a chance? Now, Mr. Gibbs, how long do you think it will take for you to decide about this?

Gibbs

I've decided about it already. Mr. Pasinski and Mr. Rabiner brought me down the drawings and specifications this morning and while I am not prepared to render a formal opinion, for the purpose of securing the option, I have no hesitation in saying that Mr. Bates's car is a highly marketable proposition.

Mawruss

Then you think we should ought to go into this, Mr. Gibbs?

Gibbs

That is for YOU to decide. I am not a financial man, I am only an engineer.

Abe

An engineer! Mawruss, do you mean to tell me that you are going to invest our money on the word of an engineer?

Mawruss

Why not?

Abe

Why not! What does an engineer know about automobiles?

Mozart

Do you know what an engineer is?

Abe

Yes, and I know what a brakeman is and a conductor is. Did you ever hear the like? Brings for an expert a man which used to was an engineer. Why don't you consult a station agent and be done with it?

Mawruss

Well, what is the use of going on with a feller which thinks all engineers run engines? This gentleman is an automobile engineer, which nowadays there is all kinds of engineers - electrical engineers, chemical engineers, agricultural engineers, mining engineers.

Abe

And I suppose you and me used to be garment engineers, and Pasinski was a clothing engineer. Go ahead, Mr. Gibbs. You've got to excuse me that I don't know what an engineer means. I didn't have much of an education to start with, and being partners with Mawruss Perlmutter for 20 years ain't going to make nobody a college gradgawate neither.

Mawruss

Abe, did these gentlemen come here to listen to your insults or are we going to do any business? Now please, Mr. Gibbs, explain this thing again. My partner wouldn't interrupt you.

Gibbs

Now let me see. How can I explain this without using technical language?

Mawruss

Use any language you please. My partner wouldn't understand you anyway.

Bates

Perhaps I'd better do the explaining. There's no use anyone going into this thing unless they go into it with their eyes open. This is not an experiment by some pipe dreamer or an experienced and practical automobile mechanic and I know what I'm talking about. I've made use of the experience of other manufacturers and my claim is that I have a car here which can be made for two hundred dollars, chassis and engine complete. Now you can put any kind of a body on it and make the list price what you please, but you can always figure that you can make a profit of 100% on your chassis and engine alone.

Mawruss

How about that, Mr. Gibbs?

Gibbs

That's absolutely true. I should say that Mr. Bates's claim is not extravagant.

Marks

What did I tell you boys?

Mozart

I've heard enough. I'm in it for all I can raide. How about you, Mawruss?

Mawruss

I'm agreeable. How about you, Abe?

Abe

I say no.

Mozart

You mean to say these gentlemen don't know what they're talking about?

Abe

I don't mean to say nothing. They know automobiles, but they don't know me. Some people, if they get shot with a gun, the bullet is made of gold and it hits them in the pocket, but with my luck a strong swimmer could drown from a hot water bag busting.

Bates

But I tell you you can't go wrong on this. It needs just one thing and that's capital - enough money to manufacture in big quantities. Form a big corporation, make yourselves

the directors, anything you want. Leave the manufacturing to me and I'll promise you millions.

Mozart

All right, we won't waste any time. We'll go over to Henry D. Feldman's office and get busy with the incorporation.

Abe

Incorporation?

Mozart

Why, I know hundreds of people who will buy stock and all your friends will go in, too.

Mawruss

Well, Abe, are you coming?

Abe

Wait a minute. You mean to say that you and me should go into this corporation and sell stock to our friends?

Mawruss

Why not? Shouldn't we let our friends in on this, too? Ain't it a perfectly honest, straightforward business proposition?

Abe

These gentlemen say it is.

Mawruss

And don't you believe them?

Abe

I do.

Mawruss

Then aren't you going into it?

Abe

No.

Mawruss

Now listen, Abe, don't be a fool.

Marks

Why, Abe, do you think we would ask you to go into it if we thought it wasn't all right?

Mozart

Come, come, Abe, don't be absurd.

Abe

Say, say, what am I! A child? When I make up my mind I make my mind and I wouldn't go into it not if I could cash in tomorrow for a million. A hunch is a hunch. I wouldn't do it.

Mawruss

And that's final.

Abe

It is.

Mawruss

All right, gentlemen. Come on.

(Exit PASINSKI, RABINER and GIBBS)

Are you coming, Mr. Bates?

Bates

When I've got these drawings together.

Abe

Mawruss, listen to me just a minute.

Mawruss

Say, all my life I've listened to you, and so far I ain't heard NOTHING.

(Exit MAWRUSS)

Abe

Ai, that's the way it goes. For years and years you work to get where you are, and when you get there where ARE you?

Hattie!

(Enter MISS FRIEDMAN from behind books with notebook)

Hattie

Yes, Mr. Potash.

Abe

Bring your book and come with me to Feldman's office.

Hattie

Then you HAVE changed your mind?

Abe

I ain't changed my mind. I ain't GOT no mind. I lost it when I went into business with Mawruss Perlmutter.

(Exit ABE and HATTIE)

(A slight pause, during which BATES packs his papers, whistling cheerfully)

(Enter DAN)

Miss Friedman! Miss----- Dan

(Sees Bates and then suddenly stops. The two men eye each other a second and then BATES bursts out laughing)

Bates
Well, what do you know about this! If it ain't Dan the Dip.

Dan
Dumbwaiter Joe! I haven't seen you in ten years.

Bates
What are YOU doing here?

Dan
This is where I work. And what are you doing here?

Bates
Why, I'm working here too. You see, Dan, I'm an inventor, and I have a car here which can be made for two hundred dollars, chassis and engine complete. Now you can put any kind of a body on it and make the list price, but you can-----
(He is still talking as the CURTAIN FALLS)

C U R T A I N

POTASH AND PERLMUTTER MOTORS, LTD.

A C T II

A C T I I

SCENE I

SCENE:

Office and Showroom as before.

AT RISE BATES is at telephone. He looks around furtively and juggles the hook.

Bates

(At phone)

Hello....Hello....Is this Detroit?.....Sure I'm calling Detroit. I put in the call two hours ago.....Listen, Central, there's no reason why that call shouldn't have been put thru....I said...Oh, hello!....Ready with Detroit?

All right.....Hello, hello!

(With change of tone)
That you, Slim?.....This is Joe. Today's the day....Now get this. Buffalo--same place--tomorrow 6:30....Got it?

(As he sees DAN enter he changes his tone and speaks as if talking business to some firm about to order.)

Yes, but rush it along. We're going to assemble in half an hour...I know, but you've got to rush it. I'm going to pull off a stunt today that will open your eyes....All right.

(Turns to Dan)

Want me?

Dan

Yes.

Bates

(As Dan hesitates)

Well, go on, what's the trouble? Speak up Bo I'm in a bit of a hurry. I promised these boys that they would see a car today and they're going to see it.

Dan

What's the game?

Bates

What game?

Dan

Oh, come on, come across. What's your game?

Bates

I'm in a hell of a rush.
(Starts out, then hesitates as DAN tries to stop him)
If I tell you, will you promise to keep it quiet?

Dan

All right.

Bates

All right it is.
(Quite confidentially)
I'm going to put this thing over - on the level.
(Laughs)

Dan

Clever, ain't you? Now let's have the straight of it.

Bates

That's just it, Sonny. You've probably heard folks spring that old gag how a crook, if he devoted himself to something on the level with the same cleverness he did to his crookedness, what a wonder he'd be. You've heard that, haven't you?

Dan

Rings kind of familiar.

Bates

Well, I've taken 'em at their word. I've done just that. You don't believe it, eh?

Dan

Ever try to straighten a bent pin? You can get it fairly even with a lot of work, maybe, but you NEVER get EVERY kink out of it.

Bates

Talking for yourself or me, Sonny? Why can't I say the same things to you? Got all the nasty little kinks out of yourself, Sonny?

Dan

I can give you my record here.

Bates

And I can give you mine. The plans I handed these boys were passed on by an expert - and expert I had no hand

in choosing. You yourself know something about cars and I've seen you snooping about. Well, are they all right?

Dan

As far as I know.

Bates

They ARE all right - the best plans ever devised for a car of this character. Now get this, Sonny. About a quarter of a million dollars have gone thru this firm one way or another. I have purposely not touched a cent of it. I've asked no bonus; made no demand for a big sum when the car was to be finished. I have taken a salary of 25 a week, just enough to live on. I've trailed with the firm, willing to wait until we all make good before I take out anything. Finally, within the next half hour I am going to deliver the goods. I'm going to turn out a finished product, a car that will more than make good every claim I made for it. Now do you see a single thing crooked in all that?

Dan

No, that's what makes it so damned suspicious.

Bates

Now, look here ---

Dan

I've kept my eyes open and I'll say one thing for you. As far as I can see you've trod the straight and narrow. That's why I've not given you away.

Bates

Very sweet of you, Sonny.

Dan

But don't try to put anything over on me, Joe, don't try to do it.

Bates

Not for the world, old dear. You just watch me close, and the closer you watch the less you see. Now that's off your chest let's get down and work.

(Enter POTASH and PERLMUTTER)

Mawruss

Well, what do you want me to do, stand over 'em with a club?

Abe

A dollar an hour we pay them to talk politics.

© Moorland-Spingarn Research Center
Scienter. Abe

Feldman

What do you think Scienter is?

© Moorland-Spingarn Research Center
Abe

I should know what that crook is!

Feldman

© Moorland-Spingarn Research Center
Scienter is not a man, Potash, it's an element of fraud. If you make fraudulent misrepresentations and know that they are fraudulent, then that is what is called Scienter, but these notes will show that you didn't know they were fraudulent.

Mawruss

© Moorland-Spingarn Research Center
These notes will show that he didn't know ANYTHING. Any notes would show it, so you would please talk in as near one syllable as possible, Feldman, otherwise he is liable to think that a mandamus is a fish or something.

Abe

© Moorland-Spingarn Research Center
Why should I know what a mandamus is when I've got such a Max D. Stanchfield for a partner.

Marks

© Moorland-Spingarn Research Center
Abe, please, won't you let Mr. Feldman explain to us? Now, Mr. Feldman, this affidavit they are holding us with -- who swore to it?

Feldman

© Moorland-Spingarn Research Center
Schenckmann.

Abe

Schenckmann! Always Schenckmann!

Feldman

© Moorland-Spingarn Research Center
Well, someone had to swear to the affidavit.

Abe

© Moorland-Spingarn Research Center
All right, let him swear to affidavits; he's got his health.

Feldman

I wouldn't make a threat like that.

Abe

© Moorland-Spingarn Research Center
I'm not making threats. What do you mean - threats? I don't wish him no harm, but I only hope that some day he would be crossing the street in front of a Schenckmann Six with the owner driving.

Mozart

But, Mr. Feldman, just what would it cost us to settle with these creditors?

Feldman

Well, of course, if the other creditors were settled with, you could give Schenckmann a check for his hundred thousand out of your present back account, but first you would have to pay out to the others four hundred thousand dollars.

Mawruss

And we ain't got four hundred thousand buttons.

Abe

(After a slight pause)

Tell me, Mr. Feldman, what kind of a place is this Atlanta anyway?

Mawruss

What kind of a place do you think it is, a health resort?

Abe

I don't know, but we might just as well look on the bright side of things, Mawruss, because maybe we would spend the entire season there for 25 seasons.

Feldman

As a matter of law and fact, Potash, you are the only person here who has got practically nothing to fear. These stenographic notes that your Miss Friedman made, entirely exonerates you. They show you didn't want to go into it; that you were persuaded to go into it, and that you were only so persuaded after you were assured that the whole thing was honest. These notes, after Miss Friedman has testified to them, absolutely let you out.

Abe

And do you suppose that I would want to be free if my partner goes to jail?

Mawruss

Say, so long as you are out of it I don't care what happens to the rest of us.

Mozart

Is THAT so! Ain't we got wives and children, too?

Marks

We should go to jail to save that schlemiel!

Mawruss

Say, say, my partner is my partner, and if I want to insult

him that's a parner's privilege, but nobody else could insult him while I'm around and don't you forget it! And besides, what did he know about finances, a damn fool like him.

Abe

Me a damn fool?

Mawruss

Certainly you are, and the only consolation I've got in going to jail is that for anyhow five years I wouldn't got to listen to your foolishness.

(Enter TILLIE and ROSIE)

Rosie

Now, come, Tillie, you are going to make yourself sick.

Tillie

Ai, ai, ai, ai, ai!

Abe

Rosie, for heaven's sake, what is SHE doing here?

Tillie

My Hattie, my Hattie, give me back my Hattie!

Mawruss

What do you mean - give me back your Hattie! Nothing could happen Hattie, she ain't done nothing.

Tillie

Ain't done nothing, he says! Ain't done nothing! You should never have a daughter do what she has done.

Mozart

Mrs. Potash, will you please take this female out of here? We've got troubles enough.

Tillie

Troubles he's got! MY troubles he should have.

Marks

Don't holler.

Tillie

Oh, Hattie, my Hattie!

Abe

Say, what IS this? A court house or an opera house? The first thing you know we'll all be fired out of here.

Mawruss

No such luck. Rosie, make her stop. This is a public

building. She's acting like a lunatic.

Rosie

She's had an awful shock.

Tillie

Ai, weh ist mir!

Rosie

She's just had a telegram from Hattie.

Mawruss

A telegram from Hattie! From where?

Rosie

From Buffalo.

Abe

Buffalo! When did she go to Buffalo?

Rosie

She must have went Saturday night because they was married yesterday.

Mawruss

Married! Who was married?

Rosie

Hattie and Dan.

Abe

But they said they wouldn't get married for six months.

Tillie

When did they say that?

Abe

That day I proposed to her.

Mawruss

YOU proposed to her!

Abe

HE proposed to her. I said to them they shouldn't get married for anyhow six months and he gave me his word of honor as a gentleman he wouldn't, so I said---

Tillie

YOU said! Do you mean to say you was there when he proposed to her?

Mozart

Mrs. Freidman, what's the difference WHO was there? In ten minutes there would be a hearing here and we've got to get ready.

Marks

For us this is serious.

Tillie

And for me it's a joke, I suppose? My only daughter elopes with an ex-convict and he makes up the match yet! Why didn't you TELL me they was engaged?

Abe

I promised not to, and---

Tillie

You promised them not to! And how about me, their mother? You have ruined my life.

Mawruss

Say, he saved your life more than once.

Tillie

And for what did he save it? Just so you and him could turn my daughter against me, and I only hope to heaven you would got to go to jail for 25 years.

Who

Abe

Say, looky here, /do you think you are talking to, a janitor? This gentleman is my partner and any insult you insult him with insults me.

Mawruss

It's all right, Abe, she's upset.

Abe

Upset or not upset, Mawruss, you are my partner and I could talk to you how I please if you'll let me, but a stranger I wouldn't stand by and hear say such things.

Feldman

This is all very interesting and it does you credit, Potash, but just remember this elopement affects me, too.

Abe

You! Since when was you in our family, Feldman?

Feldman

I'm your lawyer, and if this girl has eloped and disappeared it means that your defence contained in these notes has disappeared with her.

Mawruss

What!

Feldman

This stenographer's elopement is most unfortunate for him. He is now completely particeps criminalis.

Abe

Ai, Mommer, do you hear that?

Rosie

Abe, what is it? Mr. Feldman, can't you do something?

Feldman

I'll do my best, but this girl's absence puts him absolutely with the others in *pari delicto*.

Abe

Yes, and who put me there? He did. Murderer!

Mawruss

I did!

Abe

Sure you did. Didn't I want to fire the feller as soon as I heard he was paying attentions to Hattie - and you didn't let me?

Mawruss

But how was I to know that that was going to put you into this thing?

Abe

You should ought to have known. Pickpocket! For 25 years I have been partners with him and at the very first opportunity he puts me in this terrible thing.

Rosie

Oh, Abe, Abe, what is going to become of me!

Abe

There, there, Mommer, don't take on so. What is five years, or even ten years? It goes like nothing. And YOU would be able to come and see me on visiting days. You could bring me newspapers and once in a while a little soup.

Marks

You could bring us all some soup.

Mawruss

Bring him poison. In ten minutes his creditors would be on top of like a flock of wolves and he talks soup yet. Brace

up and think. We've got to be prepared for what is going to happen to us.

Abe

I AM being prepared. Mommer, my winter underwear is in the small trunk in the storeroom. In Atlanta it gets cold, too. Put in half a dozen pairs of socks and my medium weight blue suit.

Mozart

Potash, forheaven's sake leave off talking to your wife and listen to us.

Abe

Say, must I ask you what kind of clothes I am going to wear in Atlanta? And, Mommer, put in a bottle of asperin tablets in case I would get a headache.

Mawruss

From what do you expect to get headaches in Atlanta - over-eating? Get your mind off yourself and think of us.

Abe

Did you think of me when you wouldn't let me fire Dan for paying attentions to Hattie?

Mawruss

Well, did I think you would be such a schlemiel as to let them get married on you?

Abe

But how was I to know that their getting married was going to affent me like this?

Mawruss

You should ought to have known. You should anyhow of considered that when they called their first child Abe, right away it sets you back chotzig three hundred dollars.

Tillie

The first child they would call Harris after my poor husband Selig.

Abe

And would that stop you from pulling my leg anyhow?

Feldman

Potash, one more word out of you about anything but this proceeding and I resign from the case.

Abe

Go ahead and resign. I would just as lieve be sent to jail
in English as in Latin.

Feldman

All right, you can get another lawyer.

Mozart

Mr. Feldman, you can't do this.

Marks

Where are we going to get another sharp lawyer like you?

Feldman

What do you mean - sharp?

Mawruss

Mr. Feldman, for heaven's sake, don't desert us now. My
partner is so scared he don't know what he is talking about.
Abe, tell Mr. Feldman you are sorry.

Marks

Mr. Feldman, please!

Mozart

Please, Mr. Feldman!

(The last six lines are in the nature of ad libbing.
All being gathered around Feldman, who is collecting
his papers. In the midst of the confusion HATTIE
enters)

Abe

Mawruss, look! Hattie!

Tillie

Hattie, LEBEN, tell me you ain't married. Tell me.

Abe

Mrs. Friedman, ain't you ashamed of yourself! Your daughter
elopes with a man and you hope she ain't married him!

Rosie

Hattie, Hattie! Thank God you're back!

Mawruss

Mrs. Friedman, Rosie, be quiet, will you? Abe, make them
stop. Koosh! Will you!

(The confusion dies down. Moruss continues)
Now tell us, where is Dan?

Hattie

I don't know.

Mawruss

Then you DIDN'T marry him.

Mattie

Who says I didn't?

Abe

What! Do you mean to say you did marry him and he deserted you so quick?

Hattie

He didn't desert me.

Feldman

Then in heaven's name what did he do?

Hattie

Well, I don't exactly know.

Mawruss

You don't know!

Hattie

I don't know whether he deserted me or not. You see, we were walking down Main street just after we were married, when suddenly Dan stopped and said: "You know I just remember I have an important engagement. Now I don't know how long it will take me, but if I don't get back by night, take the 10:40 back to New York."

Mawruss

Well? Well?

Hattie

Well, he didn't get back, so I took the 10:40.

Abe

And where did HE go on his honeymoon?

Hattie

I don't know, but I think -- to Canada.

All

Canada!

Mawruss

And I suppose Bates also went to Canada?

Hattie

I wasn't interested in Bates. I didn't marry HIM.

Feldman

This is no laughing matter. You know, of course, that there are warrants issued for Bates and your husband.

Hattie

I did.

Feldman

And that if you were with them and didn't have them arrested you are an accessory to their crimes.

Hattie

Perhaps.

Feldman

No perhaps about it. You don't have to study law to know that. It's a case of res ipse loquitur.

Abe

I don't care if it's a case of e pluribus unum. No judge would send a woman to jail because she didn't have her husband arrested the very day she married him.

Hattie

And besides she hasn't done anything to be arrested for.

Feldman

You have evidence to that effect?

Hattie

The best evidence in the world.

Feldman

What is it?

Hattie

He told me so himself.

Feldman

Did he tell you anything else?

Hattie

And do you suppose that if he did, that I'd tell you?

Feldman

Then you refuse to answer any more questions?

Hattie

I certainly do. I didn't come down from Buffalo to convict my husband. I'm here to exonerate Mr. Potash.

Abe
Thank you, Hattie, thank you.

Mozart
And I suppose you don't care what happens to the rest of us.

Hattie
The rest of you went into this to make money, but he went into it because you urged him.

Mawruss
And maybe if there'd been a big profit we would have had to absolutely BEG him to take it.

Abe
That's neither here nor there. The hearing would begin at most any moment, so go ahead, Hattie, read them notes of yours.

Hattie
Where shall I begin?

Feldman
Begin at the beginning where he first met Bates.

Hattie
The first words I took down were where Bates said: "I follow the practise of all the big manufacturers."

Abe
He certainly did - he followed the biggest.

Mawruss
Don't interrupt. Go ahead, Hattie.

Hattie
Then you were introduced all around. You said you were glad to meet Mr. Bates and Mr. Potash said: "I often heard from inventors, but this is the first time I ever seen one. Tell me, how is it with inventors? Are they busy?"

Mawruss
Excuse me one moment, but is it necessary to read everything thatschlemiel said? Because if it is, they won't send him to jail, they'll put him in an asylum.

Feldman
Go ahead, Miss Friedman.

Hattie
You were then both introduced to Mr. Gibbs, the expert. You said "How do you do" and Mr. Potash said: "I suppose Mr.

Gibbs, you was also an inventor before you worked your way up. Mr. Gibbs said: "No doubt you've heard of the Gibbs Air Cooled Motor?" and Mrs. Potash said: "I should ought to have heard about it, but probably on the day they printed it in the paper somebody got murdered or some thing, and you said: "Abe, for heaven's sake, keep your mouth shut!"

Abe

You see how he insults me. Black on white she's got it. The judge will be a witness to what I've stood from this man.

Mawruss

You ain't stood 20% of what you should ought to have stood.

Feldman

Say, we won't be half thru if you don't stop this.

Mawruss

But is it necessary that we should prove out of this schlemiel's own mouth what a damn fool he is?

Feldman

Oh, go ahead, Miss Friedman.

Hattie

Mr. Gibbs then said the Climax Four was an excellent car, but that it carried too much weight in front. Bates said: "I don't carry much weight in front" and Mr. Potash said: "Please God if things break right for you you could eat in decent restaurants and carry MORE weight in front."

Abe

And was I right or was I wrong? Today yet the feller is probably living like a prince on our money. And after that, Hattie?

Hattie

Mr. Perlmutter asked how long it would take Mr. Gibbs to decide and Gibbs said he had decided already. He said that the car was a highly marketable proposition.

Mawruss

It was! It is! Ford sells three thousand of them every day.

Abe

Don't interrupt. Go ahead, Hattie.

Hattie

Then follows the part where Mr. Gibbs said he was an engineer, not a financial man, and Mr. Potash made the mistake of thinking that Gibbs was a locomotive engineer.

You remember all that.

Mawruss

The exact words I don't know, but I remember that he made a chommer of himself as usual.

Abe

Say, are you reading this or is she? Go on, Hattie.

Hattie

Gibbs then said that he would like to explain it without using technical language and Mr. Perlmutter said: "Use any language you please, my partner wouldn't understand it anyway."

Abe

All right, that's enough. I heard enough. Feldman, you are a witness. You heard what he said. Make out the papers this afternoon. I wouldn't stand for his insults no longer.

Feldman

Oh, keep cool, Potash, nobody is trying to insult you. We are trying to exonerate you, and so far, nothing has happened that helps you at all.

Hattie

It's coming right now. At this point Bates made a long explanation. I can read it if you want me to.

Feldman

Give us the gist of it.

Hattie

He said that he was an experienced automobile mechanic and that the Climax Four was no pipe dream, but a business proposition. He called on Gibbs to bear him out and Gibbs said he was absolutely right. They then all said they would go into it.

Feldman

Who was all?

Hattie

All but Mr. Potash.

Feldman

And what did he say?

Hattie

He said he wouldn't. He said that while they knew automobiles they didn't know him. He said: "Some people, if they get shot with a gun, the bullet is made of gold and it hits them

in the pocket, but with HIS luck a strong swimmer could drown from a hot water bag bursting."

Abe

With a life preserve on.

Feldman

And what did the others say?

Hattie

They said they wouldn't wait any longer; that they would go over to your office and incorporate, and Mr. Perlmutter asked him if he was coming.

Feldman

And he said?

Hattie

He asked if they expected to sell stock to their friends and Mr. Perlmutter said: "Why not? Shouldn't we let our friends in on this, too? Isn't it a perfectly honest, straightforward business proposition?" Mr. Potash said: "These gentlemen say it is." Mr. Perlmutter said: "And don't you believe them?" Mr. Potash said, "I do."

Feldman

That's excellent, excellent! What happened then?

Hattie

Mr. Perlmutter said: "Then are you going into it?" And Mr. Potash said: "No." They all spoke at once and tried to persuade him and he said he had made up his mind and wouldn't change it. Mr. Perlmutter then asked him if it was final and Mr. Potash said, "it is."

Feldman

That's all that took place at that time?

Hattie

That's all.

Feldman

Then, Potash, it absolutely establishes your innocence.

Abe

Mommer, you hear that?

Rosie

Abe!

Feldman

It proves that you went into this thing in good faith.

Abe
What did I tell you, Mommer!

Feldman
However, we are obliged to consider section 2445 of the Penal Law.

Abe
Ai, Mommer, I see it coming. I'm in again.

Feldman
As I was saying, the situation is complicated by Section 2445 of the Penal Law.

Mozart
But, Mr. Feldman, you said that if Miss Friedman swore to it, it would clear him.

Feldman
If Miss Friedman swore to it it would, but there isn't any Miss Friedman. There's only a Mrs. Davis, who is the wife of Daniel Davis. He is your co-defendant, and if these notes incriminate you they also incriminate him. Now, whether or not this married woman can testify to incriminate her husband under Section 2445 of the Penal Law is a nice legal point.

Abe
Nice! What do you mean - nice? It sends me to jail for life and he calls it nice yet.

Mawruss
But, Mr. Feldman, couldn't we be witnesses?

Feldman
They would have to be disinterested witnesses.

Marks
But why ain't we disinterested? You don't imagine we enjoy keeping him out of jail, do you?

Feldman
Well, I'll have to look into it. Maybe we can do something about it.

(Abe has been leaning on the desk with his hand on his arm, despairingly)

Rosie
Abe, he says maybe he could do something about it. Abe, do you hear?

Abe

Yes, I hear, Mommer, but when a feller like Feldman, who has got such confidence in himself, says MAYBE, we couldn't afford to take no chances, so don't forget to put in a dozen handkerchiefs, six pairs of socks, and ten cents worth of bicarbonate of soda.

(Enter SCHENCKMANN)

Schenckmann

Good morning, Mr. Feldman.

Feldman

Good morning.

Schenck

My lawyer telephoned me that he might be delayed in getting here.

Abe

He's probably driving down in a Schenckmann Six and has got stuck somewheres.

Mawruss

Abe, what's the matter with you, can't you keep still?

Feldman

Acting like this won't get you anything.

Abe

Say, the best I expect to get now is a few months off for good behaviour.

Schenck

You're very cheerful, aren't you?

Abe

Outside, maybe, but inside I am dying. That reminds me, Mommer. In case I get once in a while downhearted, put in also a small bottle methematic spirits of amonia.

Rosie

Mr. Schenckmann, you ain't going to let my husband go to jail?

Schenck

Mrs. Potash, I am represented by an attorney. He will talk for me and I recommend that you let Mr. Feldman talk for you.

Abe

You wouldn't understand him if he did. Go ahead, Feldman, give him a little Sciencer.

Feldman

Potash, Potash, you are only making things worse by acting this way to Mr. Schenckmann.

Abe

Say, say, it's a waste of time to be polite to a tiger. He would eat you anyway.

Mawruss

Listen, Abe, if you have got your mind made up to go to jail nobody is going to stop you, but at least give us an even break. Now, Mr. Schenckmann, is there any way we could settle this thing?

Schenck

Perlmutter, I've said before, I have a lawyer, and when he comes he'll speak for me.

Marks

Even if you have a lawyer, haven't you also got a heart?

Mozart

We are all of us stung in the same deal, and it's no more our fault than it is yours.

Schenck

And is it also the fault of the OTHER stockholders? I am in this to protect them as well as myself.

Tillie

Thank you, Mr. Schenckmann. At least I've got anyhow ONE friend here.

Hattie

Why, mother, what do you mean?

Tillie

Don't talk to me, you're no better than the rest of them. Yes, Mr. Schenckmann, you bring up a child in the way she should go and when she gets old enough she turns around like a snake in the grass and bites the hand that feeds her.

Mawruss

Mrs. Friedman, do you suppose Mr. Schenckmann is interested in your family matters?

Tillie

I've got nothing to say to you, Mr. Perlmutter. Any communications which you have got to make to Mr. Schenckmann and me should ought to go thru our lawyer.

Schenckmann

OUR lawyer.

Tillie

I am also a stockholder, Mr. Schenckmann, and so far as them sharks are concerned, I give you leave to go as far as you like.

Abe

You hear that, Mommer?
operations.

And for this I schencked her three

Hattie

She doesn't know what she's talking about. She's all unstrung.

Tillie

I've got a right to be unstrung. My only daughter they've turned against me, and now I lose my money yet.

Schenckmann

How much stock have you?

Tillie

Two hundred and twenty dollars and fifty cents, the savings of a lifetime.

Schenck

Is that a fact? Well, I thought you fellows were anyhow crooks on a big scale, but when you steal this poor woman's few pennies you're nothing but a bunch of second story men.

Abe

Say, I don't even give you credit for risking your neck as a second story man. You are nothing but a greengoods man, a gold brick faker.

Feldman

Potash, Potash, what kind of language is that?

Potash

I ain't a language shark like you, Feldman. I speak only plain downtown English, and I say that anybody who is guilty of manufacturing a car like the Schenckmann Six ought to be electrocuted.

Rosie

Mr. Schenckmann, he's all excited. He don't know what he's saying.

Schenck

Do you suppose it makes any difference to me what he says?

Tillie

Why should it to a high grade business man like you.

Mawruss

Say, it's his kind of business man that ruins all business.

Tillie

And what kind of business men are you?

Abe

If we have stung other people in getting stung ourselves we didn't MEAN to, but he cheats people and he MEANS to cheat them. Now go ahead and put us out of business. If YOU'RE a business man I'd sooner be a convict.

Schenck

You'll get your wish. From now on I couldn't show you fellows any mercy. I'll put you right thru and you'll get the limit.

Tillie

And it ain't a bit more than you deserve neither.

Hattie

Mother, how can you speak this way, after all he's done for you.

Tillie

Mr. Schenckmann don't know the half of what he done for us.

Abe

And neither do you, Mrs. Friedman, because I don't mind telling you now that not only was I there when Dan proposed to your Hattie, but I helped him out yet.

Rosie

You mean you persuaded Hattie to accept him?

Abe

Worse than that. I gave him five hundred dollars to get married on.

Mawruss

Well, if you want to spend money that way---

Abe

That's just it. It wasn't my money, it was the firm's money.

Mawruss

What! You went to work and gave Dan five hundred dollars to get married on and charged it upto the firm!

Abe

I didn't give it to him to get married exactly. He says he needed five hundred dollars to get married on and offered to sell us one half of his patent for a gasoline substitute, so

knowing how fond you are of taking chances, Mawruss, I took one for you.

Mawruss

Well, you took one for the last time, because I am positively and absolutely thru with you.

Abe

But, Mawruss---

Mawruss

Mr. Feldman, when you get back to the office don't hesitate for a minute. Write out a summons for him.

Feldman

A summons for what?

Mawruss

I want our partnership busted up.

Feldman

Nonsense, Perlmutter, you can't break up a partnership for that.

Mawruss

You mean to say that one partner could spend five hundred dollars like that and not tell the other?

Abe

I was waiting for a favorable opportunity.

Mawruss

And I suppose that this is a favorable opportunity.

Abe

Say, the only favorable opportunity for breaking it to you that I spent even ten dollars of your money would be to give you either first and then chloroform you.

Mawruss

And what have you got to show for your five hundred?

Abe

Nothing.

Mawruss

Nothing?

Abe

The way I figured it was, that if Dan has a patent for a patent fuel, it would be just our luck that it turns out to be Omega Oil or Dr. Brown's Celery Tonic.

Feldman

But if you bought half a patent you ought to have an assignment of it.

Abe

I ought to, but I ain't.

Hattie

Yes, you have. Dan told me to give you this.

Abe

What's this?

Feldman

It's an assignment of patent by Daniel Davis to Abraham Potash and a duplicate appears to have been filed in the patent office in Washington.

Mawruss

So far as I'm concerned you could also file it in the Street Cleaning Department.

Schenck

In any event, it's one of the assets of this bankruptcy.

Feldman

I'm not so sure of that.

Mawruss

Me neither.

Feldman

What are you, a lawyer?

Mawruss

I'm not even a doctor, but if that's an asset, diabetes is an amusement.

Schenck

Well, well, well! Fashions change in swindles as in everything else. One year it's gold from sea water, the next it's synthetic diamonds, and now it's a substitute for gasoline. You know, Feldman, I feel sorry for those two simpletons. Somebody ought to put them in jail for their own protection.

Feldman

Mr. Schenckmann, you've got those two men entirely wrong. They're not simpletons - far from it. But they let their good hearts run away with them. Why, when Potash bought this patent he was not investing in anything but this girl's happiness.

Schenck
You're getting quite sentimental for a lawyer.

Feldman
I'm not appealing to you as a lawyer; I'm talking to you man to man. Give these people another chance. They're good moral risks, and I'll stake my reputation for spotting crookedness in business that they'll pay back every cent they owe. Now what do you say?

Schenck
You make it hard for me to do my plain duty by my fellow stockholders, but I tell you what I'll do: I'll have these proceedings discontinued if they will make a general assignment to me of all their stock in trade, fixtures, book accounts, if any, and trademarks and patents.

Marks
Mr. Schenckmann, this is fine of you.

Mozart
It's more than we could expect.

Mawruss
Well, Mr. Schenckmann, I don't know how to express myself. Abe, did you hear what Mr. Schenckmann said?

Abe
Yes, I heard.

Mawruss
Well, couldn't you show no gratitude nor nothing?

Abe
What's the hurry?

Mawruss
What do you mean - what's the hurry? All we've got in the world is some steel which maybe we don't own at all, and a little second hand machinery and fixtures, and for this Mr. Schenckmann is willing to let bygones be bygones.

Abe
I heard the proposition.

Rosie
Ain't it wonderful of Mr. Schenckmann?

Abe
I don't know.

Mawruss
What do you mean - you don't know? Are you crazy?

Abe

Listen, Mawruss, you've got an awful short memory. Five minutes ago Mr. Schenckmann said that he wouldn't show us any mercy and that he would put us in jail. Now he says he's willing to let bygones be bygones - and why? Just because Feldman makes a little speech and he didn't use no Latin at that.

Feldman

Oh, Potash, don't look a gift horse in the mouth.

Abe

Say, once in a while a gift horse has false teeth. Also, Feldman, you could dry-clean a tiger till you got gasoline poisoning, and he wouldn't change his stripes, so what I want to know is, what happened in the past five minutes that made THIS tiger all of a sudden such a turtle dove.

Tillie

Now you see what a Rosher he is! Don't show him no more pity, Mr. Schenckmann.

Marks

She's right, Abe, jail is too good for you.

Mozart

Schlemiel. Always spoiling everything.

Mawruss

Abe, what's the matter with you? Do you want to ruin us all?

Rosie

Mr. Schenckmann, please! He don't know what he's saying. He's crazy with his troubles. Don't be hard on him.

Schenck

It's all right, Mrs. Potash. I've passed my word and anything he could say now wouldn't make any difference. So go ahead, Feldman, prepare the necessary papers.

Feldman

All right, I'll draw a general assignment as soon as I get back to the office. But you understand that a general assignment for the benefit of creditors is an act of bankruptcy.

Schenck

I'll settle with the creditors. Just draw the general assignment and an assignment of the patent.

Mawruss

Go ahead, Mr. Feldman, that is agreeable to us.

One moment.

Abe

Mawruss

Well, what's the matter now?

Abe

Every woodshed has got a nigger in it.

Mawruss

Say, is this a time to talk about niggers?

Abe

Yes, Mawruss, here is the nigger in the woodshed, and it's a regular Jake Johnson.

Feldman

Come, Potash, you're wasting my time here.

Abe

A lawyer always charges for his time whether it's wasted or not, so don't also waste money by drawing that assignment of patent.

Feldman

Why not?

Abe

Because I won't sign it.

Mawruss

Who gives a damn whether you sign it or not! Under our partnership agreement, one partner can sign for both, so draw the papers, Mr. Feldman, I'll sign it.

Abe

You can't sign it.

Mawruss

Who says I can't?

Abe

I do. This patent don't come under our partnership agreement. Dan assigned it to me, individually, and I WON'T SIGN IT.

Feldman

Don't be a fool, Potash. What is that patent worth?

Abe

I paid five hundred dollars for it.

Feldman

And it isn't worth five hundred cents.

Abe

Then if it isn't, you will be willing to settle with out.

Schenck.

I won't do anything of the kind.

Mawruss

Oh, sign over the patent and be done with it. It isn't worth arguing about.

Abe

You think it's no good?

Mawruss

Certainly I do.

Abe

And, Mr. Feldman, you don't think it's worth anything either?

Feldman

I told you I didn't.

Abe

Well, it's hardly any use asking Mr. Schenckmann.

Schenck

It's worth just exactly the value of the paper it's written on.

Abe

All right, then I tell you what I'll do. I paid five hundred for it and I think it's worth that much to me. I've got lots of friends who will still trust me for five hundred so I'll keep this patent and pay you five hundred instead.

Schenck

Now then, Potash, for the last time, I won't argue with you any more. Will you, or will you not, assign that patent to me?

Abe

And I wouldn't argue with you any more. Will you, or will you not, accept that five hundred dollars?

Schenck

I will not. You either assign that patent to me or the whole thing is off.

Abe

Then the whole thing is off.

Mozart

Potash, do you know what you are doing?

Abe

Sure, I know.

Marks

You are ruining us, me, him, your own partner and yourself.

Mawruss

Abe, be sensible for my sake.

Abe

I am sensible. Can't you see what this means? If Schenckmann is willing to give up his hundred thousand and pay four hundred thousand more to the stockholders and make himself liable for the steel we've bought just to get hold of this patent, there must be anyhow a million in it.

Mawruss

Abe, where did you get this mania?

Abe

It ain't a mania, it's a hunch. I had a hunch that I shouldn't go into that Climax Four and I was right. I have a hunch that I should hang on to this and again I'm right. But whether I am right or I ain't right, I wouldn't let this crook get hold of it. I would jump into the river with it first.

(Enter U.S. COMMISSIONER)

Schenck

All right, you've made your choice, now you'll have to stick to it. Once and for all, I'm thru. This proceeding will go on, and I'll send every last one of you to Atlanta for the rest of your natural lives.

Commissioner

Excuse me, but aren't you sitting in the wrong seat? Anyone who has the authority to commit these defendants to jail ought not to be sitting at this desk. That's his place up here.

Schenck

Do I have to ask you where I can sit?

Feldman

Mr. Schenckmann, please.

Commissioner

It's all right, Feldman. If he doesn't want to sit in that chair I suppose I'll have to do it myself. Are you ready, Feldman?

Feldman

I'm ready, Commissioner, but the attorney for the petitioners hasn't arrived yet.

Commissioner

Petitioners? Isn't there a criminal proceeding pending?

Feldman

The hearing is set for tomorrow morning. In the meantime, these defendants are under bail furnished by the National Surety company.

Abe

Yes, Mommer, that's a fine note. For forty years I've been doing business in this town and when it comes to a showdown my one best friend is the National Surety Company.

Rosie

Mr. Commissioner, you ain't going to send my husband to jail. He couldn't stand it in jail. He's used to a good home. Say you wouldn't send him to Atlanta.

Commissioner

I can't send anybody to Atlanta. I can only hold a hearing to see if your husband ought to be committed for trial, and if you try to prejudice me in advance I won't be able to do even that. I shall have to send you all in before the Federal Judge.

Feldman

Mrs. Potash, you must keep quiet or you'll be committed for contempt.

Rosie

What have I got to do with contempt? All I want is to get my husband out of this.

Mawruss

You are getting him IN not OUT. You'll get a chance later if you want to be a witness.

Abe

How can she be a witness? She ain't been coached.

Feldman

Potash, what do you mean by a remark like that?

Abe

Well, you didn't give her no pointers, did you?

Rosie

I don't need no pointers. If my husband would of given away that patent to this man he would have let up on him. He would do it yet if Abe would only give away for five dollars something which is worth a million.

Commissioner

Now I certainly can't hold this hearing.

Feldman

But, Mr. Commissioner, what she says has nothing to do with this hearing. It refers to what took place here a few minutes ago.

Schenck

It's a deliberate attempt to prejudice the court against me.

Commissioner

I told you before I'm not the Court. I'm only a Commissioner, but as long as I'm not going to hold this hearing I may as well tell you that anything this lady may have said in her excitement hasn't changed the impression you made on me when I came in here.

Schenck

Whatever you heard me say, I was justified in saying.

Abe

Yes, justified. First you are going to have no mercy on us, then you learn I own a patent, and then if I would give you the patent you would be our good friend, and then when I wouldn't give you the patent you would send us to jail for life.

Schenck

I'm not going to argue with you again. But I do want to explain to this gentleman that the patent, isn't worth a cent. I offered to do them a favor for the sake of their families and he insulted me. As a result I used the language you heard me use, and if it was improper I'm glad to apologize for it.

Commissioner

As a United States Commissioner I accept your apology.

Abe

But as a private citizen, ain't you got no curiosity to know why he wants the patent if it ain't worth nothing.

Schenck

As a private citizen or otherwise, I've got nothing to conceal from this gentleman. This is a patent for a fuel for internal combustion engines. Now I speculate in everything that relates to automobiles, and I thought that I could help these men and at the same time, take a gamble.

Commissioner

Have you investigated this patent?

Schenck

I don't know anything more about it than they do.

Commissioner

Well, then let me suggest, or rather let Feldman suggest it,

because the first thing you know I'm going to be guilty of something for which I can be removed from office.

Feldman

I'm ready to suggest anything.

Commissioner

Then how about renewing this offer of settlement.

Schenck

I'm willing.

Abe

And I ain't.

Mawruss

Why are you so stubborn? Feldman tells you to do it, your wife tells you to do it, even this gentleman here tells you. Who else do you want to advise you - Judge Brandeis?

Hattie

Well, I haven't advised him yet.

Commissioner

Who is this young lady?

Hattie

I'm the wife of the man who invented this patent fuel.

Schenck

What of it?

Hattie

You are one of the directors of the Vulcan Refining company.

Schenck

I am.

Hattie

Then don't you know that for over a month the Vulcan Refining company has been in negotiation with my husband trying to buy this patent?

Abe

And he would even take a gamble. He ain't a gambler, he's a baseball fixer.

Schenck

The Vulcan Refining company has never approached this woman's husband. He's a fugitive from justice and she's just taking a chance.

Hattie

I'm not taking a chance with a man like you, Mr. Schenckmann.

(Goes to door)

Dan, come in here.

(Enter DAN)

Schenck

Mr. Commissioner, that man is wanted by the Federal authorities.

Commissioner

Well, if he's wanted, he's here, isn't he?

Dan

I'm not going to run away. I'm here for my honeymoon. Did you get that assignment of patent, Mr. Potash?

Abe

Yes, Dan, I got it and I'm going to hold on to it. Now then, Schenckmann, tell this man to his face that you didn't make any offer for this patent.

Schenck

I'll say no more till my lawyer comes.

Dan

He doesn't have to. Here is the offer of the Vulcan Refining company in black and white.

Mawruss

And how much is it for?

Dan

Four hundred thousand dollars.

Mawruss

Abe, if there is anything that I've said to you that is at all out of the way, I want you to let bygones be bygones.

Abe

You are entirely welcome, Mawruss. And you ain't accepted this offer, Dan?

Dan

I have not.

Schenck

That is not our final offer. It's subject to negotiation, of course. I believe that something was said about a share of the profits.

Mawruss

A share of the profits! Abe, once in a while I am a little hasty and I lose my temper.

Abe

We all do that, Mawruss. Tell me, Dan, what is your lowest figure?

Schenck

Now look here, if you think you can hold me up, you're mistaken.

Tillie

Hold you up! Is this a way to talk in front of the Commissioner, and about my son-in-law, too?

Hattie

Mother, sit down, please.

Tillie

I won't sit down. Should I sit here and listen to my family insulted? A man like Mr. Potash, which if it wasn't for him I wouldn't be here at all. He saved my life.

Abe

Mrs. Friedman, don't throw that up to me now. If I saved your life that can't be helped. Mommer, take her out of here, please. Now, Dan, how much do you want, five hundred thousand?

Dan

I can't take five hundred thousand.

Schenck

Then how much can you take - five hundred and fifty thousand?

Dan

I can't take five hundred and fifty thousand.

Schenck

Why not?

Dan

Because it isn't worth it.

Mawruss

OO--ee, is he a chommer - a damn fool.

Abe

But, Dan, if he offers five hundred and fifty thousand, it's WORTH five hundred and fifty thousand. Why don't you accept it?

Dan

Because I've got a wife and a home and they're worth more to me than five hundred and fifty thousand dollars.

Abe

But couldn't you have a wife and a home and five hundred and fifty thousand dollars, too?

Dan

Not with this patent I couldn't.

Mawruss

Why not?

Dan

For a mighty good reason. I was served this morning with a summons in a suit to set my patent aside, and my lawyer says they'll win it too.

Commissioner

Then the patent isn't worth anything?

Dan

Not a cent.

Abe

Ai! Now listen, Mommer, maybe I would need something besides asperin. Put in the bottle of bromo seltzer - a big bottle. My head is splitting right now.

Mawruss

And if it wasn't, someone ought to split it for you. A dozen chances you had to save us all, and now it's too late. Schlemiel.

Commissioner

Mr. Schenckmann, this is nothing for a Commissioner who wants to keep his job to do, but I'm going to appeal to you just the same. Can't you help these people?

Schenck

Help them? Yes, I'll help them to be adjudged bankrupts and after that they won't need any help from me; they'll just naturally go to jail as FRAUDULENT bankrupts.

Dan

Where does the fraud come in?

Schenck

Didn't they rush my check to the bank when they knew they were gone?

Dan

They didn't know.

Schenck

Well, they were hopelessly insolvent. The only assets of this bankruptcy are the proceeds of that check.

Dan

Nothing of the kind. They've got two hundred thousand dollars in the bank right now.

Mawruss

What!

Abe

Hattie, did I marry you off to a crazy man?

Dan

Two hundred and some odd thousand dollars. I deposited it myself this morning.

Abe

YOU deposited it! Why, where could you get all that money?

Dan

From Bates. Every cent that he stole from you. He had it salted away with the Ballard Metals Corporation.

Mawruss

And how did you get it from the Ballard Metals Corporation?

Dan

The Ballard Metals Corporation was only a blind for a man called Slim, a pal of Bates's, and Slim and Bates are both in the Erie county jail.

Schenck

You had no right to seize that money.

Dan

We'll argue about that later. The important thing now is that these men have it in the bank -- and your hundred thousand too.

Abe

Well, in that case I would like to ask this gentleman a question.

Commissioner

Ask Feldman, not me.

Abe

But I want my answer in English, not Latin. I want to know if I can draw on that money to pay any of the firm's debts.

Commissioner

This isn't official, but if you are solvent, I'd take a chance.

Abe

Mawruss, have you got a blank check?

Mawruss

What do you want to do with it?

Abe

Always asking questions. Here, give it to me.

Rosie

Abe, what are you going to do?

Abe

Give me a pen, somebody.

Hattie

Here's a fountain pen.

Abe

Today is the 8th, ain't it?

(Hattie nods)

September the 8th. Ai, I wish I'd never learned to write.

(Writes check)

Schenckmann, how do you spell your rotten name?

Hattie

There it is on the affidavit.

Abe

Nah! Take it and may it bring you nothing but bad luck.

Schenck

I refuse to take it. I'm going thru with this bankruptcy proceeding.

Feldman

Go thru with it and I'll get it dismissed with costs and an extra allowance which you will have to pay. These men are perfectly solvent and they'll have enough left to start again in a small way.

Abe

Well, Mawruss, we owe all this to Dan, and only think that you wanted to fire him.

I wanted to fire him! Mawruss
YOU wanted to fire him.

Who wanted to fire him? Abe
Didn't I say when YOU said---

I said. Why it was you that said it. Mawruss

I said it! WHEN did I say it? Abe

C U R T A I N O N Q U A R R E L

